

Poem No.

3

Loveliest of Trees, the Cherry Now

(A. E. Housman)

Loveliest of trees, the cherry now
Is hung with bloom along the bough
And stands about the woodland ride
Wearing white for Easter tide.

Now, of my three score years and ten
Twenty will not come again,
And take from seventy Springs a score,
It only leaves me fifty more.

And since to look at things in bloom
Fifty Springs are little room,
About the woodland I will go
To see the cherry hung with snow.

About the Poet

A.E.Housman (1859-1936) studied at Oxford and published learned articles on classical authors. He spent his life teaching and editing the works of a minor Roman poet. He also wrote scholarly reviews. His poems are in three separate volumes written between 1895 and 1905.

His poems express simple, universal emotions—love of nature, nostalgia for the past, the pathos of man's brief existence—in sense and narratives that are easy to understand. His style is derived from the old ballads and from classical poetry. Together with his pessimism and irony, which can be savage, the formal qualities of his style keep his intense emotion from seeming sentimental.

Theme

The beauty of nature, especially of cherry is captivating. But life is too short to relish it. Even fifty years are not enough time to enjoy it fully. The poet says that one should not miss any chance of enjoying the bloom of the 'loveliest of trees', the cherry, in the woods in all seasons.

Paraphrase

Cherry, which is the loveliest of the trees, is now in full bloom and its branches are bending down loaded with flowers. It stands along the path in the woods and is all covered in snow. According to the poet's expression the cherry stands in a white dress in preparation for the celebration of Easter.

The poet says that out of the seventy years of his life, the early twenty years of age will never come again. The rest of his life of fifty years, he claims to have enjoyed the beauty of cherry blossom.

Since fifty years are not long enough to enjoy the beauty of the Spring, coloured and flavoured by the glory of cherry, the poet will avail every chance to go to the woodland to see the exotic beauty of the cherry tree whose flowery boughs are hanging down with snow.

Glossary

hung with bloom	loaded with flowers
Easter	anniversary of the Resurrection of Christ, observed on the first Sunday after a full moon on or after 21 March
three score years and ten	three sets of twenty and ten are equal to seventy years
little room	short life

EXERCISES

1. Choose the correct answer.

- i. Cherry is the loveliest in
 - a) winter.
 - b) spring.
 - c) summer.
 - d) autumn.
- ii. Easter is a festival of
 - a) Christians.
 - b) Muslims.
 - c) Hindus.
 - d) Sikhs.
- iii. Cherry is dressed in
 - a) pink.
 - b) red.
 - c) yellow.
 - d) white.
- iv. Three score years and ten are
 - a) forty years.
 - b) fifty years.
 - c) sixty years.
 - d) seventy years.

- v. How many years of poet's life would not come again?
 a) ten b) twenty
 c) thirty d) forty
- vi. Cherry glorifies
 a) life. b) mind and thought.
 c) the city. d) the environment.
2. **Mark the statements true or false.**
- i. Cherry is a flower and not a fruit.
 - ii. Cherry is the loveliest in the Autumn.
 - iii. The colour of the flower of cherry is blue.
 - iv. Seventy years are sufficient to cherish the beauty of cherry tree.
 - v. The cherry blooms in winter.
 - vi. Cherry stands about the wood land ride.
 - vii. Cherry adds to the glory of Easter.
 - viii. "To see the cherry hung with snow" is not worth seeing.
 - ix. The cherry turns woodland a haunted land.
 - x. The cherry is a feast for eyes.
3. **Add two more rhyming words in each line.**
1. cherry, _____, _____
 2. hung, _____, _____
 3. springs, _____, _____
4. **Explain the first stanza with reference to context.**
5. **What time of the year is mentioned in the first stanza?**
6. **Read the second stanza carefully and write how old is the poet?**
7. **What is the poet trying to say in the last stanza of the poem?**